

REMARKS

Independent claims 1, 17 and 33 are now pending in the present application. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the amendments thereto.

Each of claims 1, 17 and 33 were originally elected as generic claims. As these claims are now believed to be in condition for allowance, Applicants request consideration of claims 2-16, 18-32 and 34-48 as provided by 37 C.F.R. §1.141.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The drawings were objected to on the grounds that the lead line from the "end wall 36" points to the center of the hub cap in Fig. 3, and that it was unclear from Figs. 1-3 as to whether the center of the hub cap is solid or an open aperture. Paragraph [0024] of the present application states that "the body portion of the cover member 16 is bowl-shaped having an end wall 36 and an inwardly-turned sidewall 38," thereby clearly defining the numeral 36 as referencing a solid end wall.

OBJECTIONS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

The specification was objected to for failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. With respect to the "irregularity" included in claim 17, it is noted that the term "irregularity" is defined as "something that is irregular," and "irregular" as "lacking perfect symmetry or evenness." See, *Merriam-Webster*, Copyright 2005. The term within the context of claim 17, defines any irregularity on the inner surface of the at least one connector member. However, the specification has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's objections. See, paragraphs [0025], [0029], [0031] and [0034].

With respect to the "end wall" of the at least "one extension," paragraph [0024] describes an end rib 46 and side ribs 48 that extend further from an inner surface 23 than an outer rib 50, thereby providing the outer rib 50 with "an end support wall 52" (Fig. 4), paragraph [0028] defines the body portion 90 and the ribs 94 of each extension as being integrally molded with the body portion 20A and cooperating to form "an end wall 96," (Figs. 7 and 8), while paragraph [0032] defines an underside 145 of a

connector member 30B as being supported by “an end support wall 147” (Figs. 9 and 10) of an associated extension 24B, and paragraph [0035] that describes an underside 145C of a connector member 30C as being supported by “an end support wall 147C” (Fig. 11) of an associated extension 24B. Therefore, Applicants submit that proper support for the “end wall” is provided in the detailed description and accompanying drawings.

With respect to lines 2 and 15 of page 6 describing the inner surface 23 as being part of the body 20 and the end wall 36, paragraph [0024] has been amended to address a typographical error and so as to clarify that the inner surface is part of the body portion 20.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102:

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Eshler et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,998,780. Applicants assume that these rejections are in fact for independent claims 1 and 17 and have responded accordingly. As amended, claim 1 defines a wheel cover assembly that comprises, among other things, at least one connector member having a proximal end snappably coupled with the distal end of an extension of a wheel cover, and a distal end adapted to releasably couple with a vehicle wheel, wherein a majority of the at least one connector member extends axially inwardly from the extension. Eshler et al. does not disclose such an arrangement, therefore cannot anticipate that which is defined in claim 1.

Accordingly, claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Independent claim 17, as amended, defines a wheel cover assembly that comprises, among other things, at least one connector member having a proximal end coupled with a distal end of at least one extension of a wheel cover such that the at least one connector member abuts an end wall of the at least one extension and a majority of the at least one connector member extends axially inwardly from the extension. Again, as noted above with respect to claim 1, Eshler et al. does not disclose any such arrangement, and therefore cannot anticipate claim 17.

Applicant : Gregory R. Hauler
Appln. No. : 10/757,335
Page -16-

Accordingly, claim 17 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Ladouceur, U.S. Patent No. 5,595,422. Again, it is assumed by the Applicants that the Examiner is actually referring to independent claim 33, and have responded accordingly. Independent claim 33, as amended, defines a wheel cover assembly that comprises, among other things, at least one connector member including a proximal portion adapted to snappably couple with the at least one extension, and a distal portion adapted to snappably couple with a vehicle wheel such that a majority of the at least one connector member extends axially inwardly from the extension. Ladouceur does not disclose such an arrangement, and therefore cannot anticipate claim 33.

Accordingly, claim 33 is in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, independent claims 1, 17 and 33 are in condition for allowance. Thus under 37 C.F.R. §1.141, Applicant is entitled to consideration of dependent claims 2-16, 18-32 and 34-48 which are written in dependent form from claims 1, 17 and 33, respectively, which are in condition for allowance, as noted above.

Accordingly, claims 1-48 are now in condition for allowance, a Notice of Allowability is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

By: Price, Heneveld, Cooper,
DeWitt & Litton, LLP

Dated: January 6, 2006



Brian E. Ainsworth
Registration No. 45 808
695 Kenmoor, S.E.
Post Office Box 2567
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501
(616) 949-9610

BEA:kjc